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[P.55]

Chapter IV

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, PUBERTY

For the Kols there are certain very obvious turning points of life, and at such times Kols believe that evil is present, ready to render the outcome of events unfavourable. To Kols the anxiety is not merely one born of a physical crisis but goes deeper into their consciousness, for at such times favourable supernatural aid must be secured or the evil spirits will triumph over them. Hence at these turning points there are certain rites and ceremonies which must be observed and recourse should not be had to some newer unknown and untried method. Kols are unable to give a rational account of why they perform these rites; as far as they are concerned it is just the custom. Though in many cases the customs may have been adopted from Hinduism, it was so long ago that Kols are now altogether unconscious of it. It should be remembered, therefore, that many of the things described in this connection will also be found true of the village folk all over this part of Central India. An attempt has been made by long and patient enquiry to find out what the Kols themselves do on these important occasions, but we have not sought to compare them with other groups in this regard.

771 777 782 [177]

Birth Customs. *Pregnancy.* The pregnant mother is not considered unclean and there are no particular taboos placed upon her. She is allowed to go about her regular work and do all cooking and household duties without restriction. She may eat what she likes and there are no foods which she must avoid other than those a Kol never uses. She should be careful, however, not to go near places where *bhuts* and other evil spirits are known to lurk, they might attack her and as a result cause a miscarriage. When the woman comes to know that she is pregnant the matter is taken to the family goddess—*devi*—who is usually resident in one corner of the house and she is promised that she will receive an offering if she protects the mother and the unborn babe for the full time of pregnancy. After delivery, or often shortly before if all has gone well, the family will present to the *devi* the particular things that they had promised her. This may be an animal such as a goat, pig or chicken, or just a cocoanut. Again, the simple *hom* offering or fire sacrifice is common. This consists of an oblation of clarified butter (*ghi*) placed in the fire burning before the *devi*, the anointing of the wall with vermilion (*sendur*) and the

843 [783] [262] 843 782 [776]

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843 782 presentation of a piece of a broken cocoanut. Occasionally, particularly when the woman is in severe pain before the time her birth-pangs are expected and normal, there may be a special sacrifice of one of the animals noted above. Hindus also observe similar ceremonies.

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845 789 *Labour.* Among the more primitive Kols difficult labour is ascribed to evil spirits; the more advanced ones speak of it as a punishment due from Bhagawan for some bad *karma*. In case the delivery proves difficult there are certain things that should be done. Some Kols definitely averred that nothing can alter the difficulties of labour, but questions have been answered in such a way by others that it appears to be established that there are magical practices in this connection. If things are not going well the first thing to be done is to make a suitable offering to a *devi* or *deva*, or both. Then one should go carefully about the house and open the mouth of each covered earthen pot; the knots on every bundle should be carefully untied and strings or pieces of ropes untwisted. As far as possible every closed thing in the house should be opened up. This, it is believed, will make the delivery easier. Often five handfuls of rice are taken out of the opened rice jar and Bhagawan is challenged to divide the grains into two equal parts without making an error. They imply that if he can do such a thing and do it right he will surely be able to see the child safely through delivery.

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Kols generally believe that the soul of the child enters and possesses its new body before the child is born. The more general opinion is that the movements of the child in the womb, which first occur about the sixth month, are the signs that the body has received its soul and is already a person. The soul is a gift to the child by Paramatma, and it enters the child's body through the mouth, nose or ears. The Kols' idea of the state and nature of the soul before entering the child's body is very vague and it is unusual to find any clear idea of transmigration and previous existence in another body.

Delivery. There is no uncleanness attached to the woman up to the time of the birth of her baby, but for six days thereafter she is considered unclean. The actual delivery of the child always occurs at home for no use is made of hospitals or the like.

When the time of birth is near the female relatives who have come for the occasion take charge of her. No male members of the family are allowed in the delivery room and men are kept out for the six days following. In a few places however we learned that they might enter after three days. Her mother-in-law and her sister are the ones to make the arrangements and do the actual work, although other female members of the two families may stand ready to assist. The woman awaits her time in a darkened room protected as far as possible from the entry of evil spirits. A few hours before (and sometimes just at the time) birth is expected a mid-wife—*dai*—is summoned. The Kols usually summon a Chamarin, or if she is not available, a Basorin. Sometimes, particularly around Jubbulpore, the Basorin seems to be preferred. If the birth should occur before the *dai* arrives the women in the house can do everything except the cutting of the umbilical cord. In one place we asked what would happen if the *dai* did not arrive and they replied that before a Kolin would cut the cord they would have to let the mother and baby die! Some Kols are said to do it themselves, but we did not find any who admitted that they do so. If the child should be born in a field the mother gathers up the child and the after-birth in her *sari* and carries it home and then the *dai* is called to cut the cord and care for the infant.

The birth usually occurs with the mother squatted on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket placed upside down on the floor, her head meanwhile resting on her hands. The female relatives support her and give encouragement. The *dai* is the one to receive the child. No one in the family should touch the child until it has first been purified by the *dai*. This applies to the mother as well. The *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with an iron instrument which

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busy and they will not bother the sweets. Often it is said that no particular ceremonies are observed as the body is being carried toward the burial place. Nothing is done at the time of the crossing of small streams.

Up to this time no work has been done at the funeral ground, and no one has gone ahead to prepare the grave, or pyre; all is done after the arrival with the body. The funeral ground is always near some stream or *nala* (dried up water-course). Kols practice both cremation and burial and it is usual that the dead are cremated only a few feet away from the place where the burials take place. The introduction of cremation may be due to Hindu influences. On the whole burials are far more common than cremations because, Kols suggest, they are much cheaper, and the subsequent formalities of gathering the ashes and taking them to a river are not necessary. Burial is much the simpler process, and is first described.

BURIAL (*Garna.*) The funeral party arrives at the *masan* where the body is put down, head north and feet south. Some of the men in the party have brought implements for digging and go to seek a suitable place to dig the grave. Others remain with the body and prepare it for burial.

Preparation of the Body. Up till this time it is usual to find that the person has on the clothes in which he died. As he was transported to the burial place a white cloth was thrown over him. Now this and the clothes are removed. In the case of a male corpse the men attend to the changing of the garments, the washing and anointing. If the corpse be of the opposite sex the women attend to everything connected with its preparation. The body is first washed with water brought by the women from the village tank or well in new *gharas*. No pregnant woman should carry water, nor should she accompany the procession to the funeral place. Some of the water may be retained for a ceremonial sprinkling when the people get back to the village. After the body has been washed and dried it is anointed with a mixture of *til* or *karwa* oil and *haldi*. Sometimes *ghi* is also rubbed on. The corpse is now ready to wrap in new clothes which have just been purchased. If the family is not able to afford new clothes old ones which have been carefully washed will do. The grave clothes must always be white no matter the sex or the age. No coloured cloth should be used. The old clothes are taken away by the Basor. The hair is oiled and combed and the body is made as attractive as possible. Sometimes, in more Hinduized situations, the *nai* is called to shave the body and to prepare the hair, but he is not usually called for a woman. If the body is

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764 that of a woman her glass bangles are broken and her metallic jewellery removed. The breaking of the glass bangles is a symbol of the dissolution of her marriage. From many enquiries it appears that neither food, coins or iron is put into the mouth of the deceased.

766 Up to this point it seems that the bodies of men and women are treated alike, except that persons of corresponding sex make them
● 843 ready. Only in rare cases a trace was found which indicated that there is the belief that the soul of the pregnant woman might become
[776] an evil spirit called a *churel*; preparations for burial of such women seemed to be uniformly the same as when the woman is not with child. Only once in scores of burials was there any indication that the pregnant woman was cut open after her death and the fœtus removed and buried with her. This, if ever done among the Kols, is now a rare thing with them.

Digging the Grave. In the meantime the grave is being made
764 ready. The spot where it is to be dug must first be "purchased." This is done by one of the relatives who, when the place has been decided on, strikes the ground five times with his *phaora* or mattock. Two pice are then laid down on the ground and the digging proceeds. It is proper for the chief male mourner to break the first earth at the spot agreed upon. He may take out five or seven clods and thereafter relatives or friends lend a hand and complete the task. The grave is dug in a north-south line, and is about six feet long, three feet wide and four feet deep. "Chest deep" is the rule. No special implements are used in digging nor are the ones used considered unclean afterwards. When the grave has been dug there are still things which must be done before the body can be laid in it. One of the relatives sprinkles a little salt on the bottom of the grave. Usually, though, a cloth is
[263] laid in first, using the one which was thrown over the body after death, or the blanket on which he died, and the salt is sprinkled over this. The body is now lowered into the grave. One or two men enter the grave, the body is passed down to them and they place it in its proper position.

In the case of a woman she is buried flat on her back, face upwards, having her arms stretched by her side with the palms up.
[823] Male corpses are laid face downwards with the hands folded behind over the buttocks, palms upwards. In both cases the head is to the north.[1] After the body is properly placed it is covered with another

[1] The direction in which the body is placed in the grave varies considerably among primitive tribes. The Murhas have the head to the south; the Birhors likewise. The Hill Bhuiyas are laid on the left side with the head to the south and face to the west. The Munda tribes, Kharias, Hos and Santals bury their dead with the head north. Hodding states that the Santals burn with the head south. (*Census of India*, 1931; 1 : 3, p. 102). Elwin finds that the Baigas bury with the head south. (*The Baigas*, p. 208).

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brow of the deceased seven times as the mourner encircles the body. It is then put into the clothes and carried about.

If a woman is carrying a *ghara* of water and sees a dead body she should at once throw out the water and return to get a fresh supply.

KOL CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH. It was noted that it is not a general belief among the Kols that the spirits of the dead return to trouble the family. The belief that the spirit of a pregnant woman becomes a *churel* is well known but even this is not consistently held. Further comments on this aspect will be found in a later section.[1]

Generally speaking, the Kols believe that the spirits of the good dead go to a place called *baikuntha* which in a general sense corresponds to a place of happiness, or paradise. The wicked may sometimes return as evil spirits—a male as a *bhut* and a female as a *churel*; but one must be rather wicked to be so severely punished. Others say that the spirits of the bad go to *narkunda*, the Hindu hell, a sort of well or pit in the lower regions.

The Kols know the doctrine of *samsara* or transmigration of souls, but they seem to have neither a clear idea of its details nor of its implications. While this belief is usually admitted when they are questioned and reflected in some of their practices, nevertheless the general conception seems to play but a minor part in their thinking of the present and the future. "From now on we have nothing to do with one another."

1 See Chapter IX: Churel.

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say there is nothing one does in relation to it. The moon is thought of as feminine and the sun as masculine, for the moon is cold and the sun is hot. There are a number of beliefs and superstitions concerning the moon. It is good luck to see the new moon before any stars are out in the sky. On seeing the new moon for the first time a Kol may either tear a corner off one of his garments and cast it toward the moon, or may hold up the garment toward the moon, saying: "Take these old clothes and give me new ones." It is usual at the same time to take worn-out pieces of cloth or just rags, and hang them on the tree near the house. This attracts the goddess of torn clothes, Chithra *devi*, who will bring good luck and in the course of time new garments.

The moon is thought to have no evil influences upon men folk and therefore is not feared by them. Women, however, are likely to be affected by the moon and as far as possible should avoid it. Pregnant women especially should not expose themselves to the moon as it is liable to cause a miscarriage or a deformed infant.

The time of an eclipse of either the sun or the moon is a time of special precaution and worship. The Kols say that the sun is devoured by a giant whom they call Dhrubh. The concept that a demon devours the sun is common all over India, but the usual Hindu concept is that it is swallowed by one named Rahu, the "looser or seizer." The Kol story goes that both the sun and the moon at one time borrowed something from Dhrubh, whom Kols call the brother of Indra. This debt must be repaid, and if at any time the sun or the moon is not able to pay on the debt, it is attacked by Dhrubh who begins to devour it. He never quite does so, however and vomits it up, as there is still money owing and payments must go on. Others say that Dhrubh is merely jealous of the moon because she is worshipped and adored while he is not. Therefore he attacks either the sun or the moon. One should bathe at the time of an eclipse. During such a time women should remain inside for it is a very dangerous season especially if they are with child. The men may go out to bathe, sing and beat the drums. Wicked spirits are abroad, and unless the women are protected by charms, they are liable to be attacked. After the release of the sun or moon, the women go out to bathe. The Nerbudda is the best place in Central India, but any tank or river will do if one cannot go so far. After bathing they should give some alms to Basora who will be waiting near by. They give to no others.

At home no food is prepared or eaten during the eclipse. Nothing cooked is left in the house, and all uncooked food should be carefully protected so as not to become a prey to the evil spirits. All the earthen vessels used in connection with food and water should be thrown out

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844 CHILDBIRTH--ideas about childbirth; attitude of the community; importance of first and subsequent births; preparations for delivery; place of birth; witnesses, assistants, and excluded persons; role of midwives and obstetricians; onset and duration of labor; facilitation of delivery (e.g., pressure, massage); posture in childbirth; receiving the baby; severing and tying the umbilical cord; expulsion of placenta; disposal of exuviae; immediate care of mother and child; cleansing, bandaging, and medication of mother; adjustments to postnatal hemorrhage; treatment of baby (e.g., initiation of respiration, cleansing, swaddling); etc. See also:

Birth statistics 163
Infant and maternal mortality 166
Birth registration 217
Birthdays 527
Hospitals 743
Medical personnel 750
Special mortuary rites 786
Omens, divination, and astrology 787

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The Khangars of Central India have a tradition akin to the one related of the Thakuriyas, of a slaughter by a Bundela Rajput after they were made drunk.[1] This may be an altogether different story but probably belongs to the same period when the Rajputs came into Bundelkhand. No first-hand accounts were obtained by us which would shed any light on the origin of this *kurhi*.

5. *Garhvariya*. While this name occurs eight times in the list of Kol subdivisions nevertheless we found only one living specimen in spite of the fact that there were said to be many of this group around Jubbulpore. This particular Garhvariya came to us in a group of Thakuriyas and Rautiyas and was the butt of their jokes. He was short and dark and had a very flat nose, much broader than is usual with Kols. The other *kurhis* said to his face that they would have nothing to do with him socially. When asked about himself he said that he was a Rautiya who had the misfortune to be born out of Rewa State and hence was called a Garhvariya. The other Kols present would not agree that this was the real situation. Garhvariyas are considered unclean and no other sept will take their girls or give them their own daughters in marriage. They are mainly employed as field labourers. It is not unlikely that we met others, but they would not admit that they were Garhvariyas.

6. *Mawasi*. Very little was to be ascertained from the Kols about this group. They seem to be a very "low" *kurhi*, and do not even call in a Chamarin to act as midwife and cut the cord of the newly born infant, doing such work with their own hands. They are so low that no social intercourse is possible with Kols like Rautiyas and Thakuriyas. They are considered the most despised of all the Kols and "live just like Basors who are outcastes and make baskets and keep pigs."

The Munda tribe known as the Korkus and found in the Satpura hills of south central India are sometimes called Mowasis.[2] Regarding Korkus Russell and Hiralal state that the sept names of the Korkus are in many cases identical with those of the Kols and Korwas, which may mean that they are an offshoot of "the great Kol or Munda" tribe. The word "Mowasi" has reference to the largest of their subdivisions but its derivation is uncertain. The Census Report for the Central India Agency says : "The Mawasis were reputed to be a fighting section of the Kols."[3]

7. *Kathariya*. This *kurhi* takes its name from *kathri*, a mattress

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. iii, p. 439.
2 *Ibid.* Vol. iii, p. 550.
3 *Census of India*, 1931, xx: 1, p. 237.

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564 navvies and labourers found in Jubbulpore and adjoining districts and
[161] numbering about 1,500 persons only. They are connected by some writers with the Bind tribe of northern India and Bengal, but it is more likely that in Central India they are recruited largely from the Kol group. "In Mandla some Murhas seem to be Kols."[1] This caste is
[332] employed in all kinds of earthwork, such as building walls, excavating trenches and making embankments for large tanks or for the rice fields. We found that similar work is being done by Kols all over Central India. At Barela there is a large tank covering several acres
[312] and called 'Murhai.' Local Kols told us that it was so named because it was dug by Murha Kols many years ago.

13. *Gunj.* Russell and Hiralal not mentioned any group of this name. The 1931 Census has a "Gunjwar" in a long list of tribes and castes, but calls it "Unclassified." It was claimed that the Gunj *kurhi* originally lived in the west and came from thence into Central India. No one interrogated concerning this matter had even met a member of this *kurhi*. It is not unlikely that the name may be a variant of Binj, although one group included both in their list of Kol *kurhis*.

564 14. *Kabiriya.* The word means 'follower of Kabir' and is
794 probably basically a religious group. Kabir was brought up in the home of a Mohammedan weaver (*Julaha*), but through Ramananda came into touch with the theistic and *bhakti* type of faith proclaimed by Ramanuja. He was half-Hindu and half-Moslem and is revered by both. George Weston Briggs notes: "The real importance of Kabir rests in the enormous influence which he has exercised upon subsequent religious thinking, especially as it has affected the masses, because of his use of the vernacular. His attitude toward caste drew to himself a large following from the lower levels of society."[2] This designation on the part of the Kols shows that Kabir's influence had reached them, but the name may have some occupational significance. Kabir was a weaver and two weaver groups in Central Provinces, the Koris and the Koshtis have Kabiriya subgroups.

564 15. *Narchhila.* The name means literally "a cord cutter" and
[844] refers to the cutting of the umbilical cord at childbirth. It was stated that the *kurhi* is given the name because it does not call in a midwife from a low Hindu caste to cut the umbilical cord (*nara*) of the newborn child. It seems more likely that this is a general term, as in the case of the Swasahas, for a family in any one of the groups who for

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 233.
2 Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, p. 204.

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some reason or other do not call in a low caste midwife. It was also reported that this group does not make any use of the Hindu priest and is very low in the social scale. Some claimed that this is really a group of Chamars—leather workers in the traditional sense, but Russell and Hiralal do not mention it in their glossary of caste divisions nor does Briggs report it. It is probably of minor significance.

16. *Bhariya* is the same as Bhumiya, see above.

17. *Borowar* does not appear in Russell and Hiralal nor in the list of tribe and caste responses in the 1931 Census. Nor is Barwar found there. Barwar, said to mean "disciple of the *bar* or banyan tree" (*Ficus indica*), is listed among the septs of the Kols in the north by Crooke as was seen in the previous note[1] on his findings. In a later book Crooke speaks of Barwars as a criminal tribe of Oudh.[2]

18. *Pawai*. One group gave the information that this *kurhi* lived in the south, 'Chawhan Khand'. In Singhbhum, Bengal, the Bhuiyas call themselves *Pawan-bans* meaning 'children of the wind'. The Bhuiya highlands are called Pawri Desh.[3] This may indicate a memory of a connection now long lost.

19. *Maubhaiya*. No trace nor information concerning this group could be found. It was reported only once.

The Census of 1891 attempted to record the names of subdivisions of castes in some detail, and the resultant list contained thousands of names of every kind. The Ahir alone had over 1,700 entries. The subdivisions of the Kols manifest the same tendency and show that the groups have absorbed into themselves members from higher and lower castes. The Thakuriyas probably contain a Rajput element and at the other end we find Kols mixed with Khangars, Murhas, Khairwars and Chamars. The Kols of today are probably pretty well mixed with other groups.

MAINTENANCE OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE. Kols who live in close contact with city life have frequently lost the sense of social solidarity which characterizes the Kols living under more primitive conditions. Various factors in city life, or near-city life, tend to make the same rigid social order impossible, and yet even under these conditions there is an attempt to maintain something of the older traditions.

Almost every village has an elderly man who may be considered in a sense the head-man of the community. He is usually called *Mahata* or literally, the leader. This man is the natural head of the

1 See page 33.
2 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 166.
3 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 313.

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The birth usually occurs with the mother squatted on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket placed upside down on the floor, her head meanwhile resting on her hands. The female relatives support her and give encouragement. The *dai* is the one to receive the child. No one in the family should touch the child until it has first been purified by the *dai*. This applies to the mother as well. The *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with an iron instrument which

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844 [412] she has brought with her and takes charge of the child. The female relatives may move the mother to another part of the room. The first thing to be done to the baby when it is certain that it has begun [751] to breathe, which is learned by the crying of the infant, is to sprinkle it lightly from head to foot with wood ashes. This, it is claimed, prevents skin trouble, a possible chill, and wards off evil spirits. Ashes are also sprinkled about the floor where the mother squatted. The ashes on the child are then removed with a soft cloth and the baby is bathed in luke-warm water. It is then dried and is usually gently massaged with the sweet *til* oil from *Sesamum indicum*. The child [824] should now be given a smoke bath. There has been a fire burning in the lying-in room and into this is sprinkled some *ajwayan* or dill seed (*Anethum graveolens*), which gives a smoke with a pleasant odour. The child is waved through this several times and the smoke and warmth are said to help in removing the moisture from the body and give it protection from evil. Some old pieces of cloth are now ready and in these the child is wrapped by the *dai* who places it on a *supa* (winnowing fan).

The *dai* now turns her attention to the mother who is probably lying on some dirty rags in the corner. The mother is cleaned by the [824] *dai* and is massaged with sweet oil. Usually *karowar*, sometimes called *sarson* oil (mustard oil from *Brassica juncea*), is mixed in with the *til* oil. The *dai* should also clean up and dispose off all the dirty cloths and the placenta. We found some differences as to the method of the disposal of these things. In most places it appears that they 844 are never taken out of the house lest evil spirits work through them, 184 but that they are buried with clarified butter (*ghi*) in a hole in the earthen floor and a fire kept burning over the spot for six days. Sometimes, though rarely, the placenta and soiled cloths are collected in an earthen vessel (or sometimes placed upon a large-sized earthen tile) and are taken outside the house. These things are usually placed somewhere at the back of the house in a place which may not be visited, or are thrown on the manure pile, or sometimes they are buried there. At other times all is burned in the fire which is alight in the lying-in room and the ashes are later thrown into some stream. Again, it was said that it is all wrapped up in a dirty cloth and thrown into a secluded spot. These customs seem to vary, but the first is the most usual.

844 Roy in *The Birhors* says that this group buries the after-birth just 17 outside the door—the deeper it is buried the longer is the interval before the birth of the next child. No animal should be able to get at it and eat it, or the mother will sicken and die. In the case of the umbilical

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cord the child will die if this is eaten; if it is buried deeply the child's teeth will appear late and if shallow they come early.[1]

No traces of corresponding beliefs were found among the Kols, but they have the conviction, common to village India, that, should wrong persons get possession of the placenta and the umbilical cord they are likely to be used in magical practices dangerous to the mother and the infant. They should therefore be well-guarded and no outsider should have access to them; this is why they usually are not taken out of the house and are buried beneath the floor. A childless woman, by eating a portion of either the placenta or the umbilical cord may dispel the influences which keep her barren, but in so doing there is every chance that it will result in injury and even death in the family from which she received by stealth the required parts.

The work of the *dai* ordinarily lasts for six days, that is, during the full period of the uncleanness. Sometimes however, this is dispensed with as far as the full period is concerned, but during the time the *dai* is in the house it is her duty to care for the mother and child. For the first three days the mother is not supposed to take anything except a little milk but after that period is over she eats a bit of food after the first bath. If the child is a male the *dai* is usually paid one rupee for her work, and if the child be of the other sex, half that amount. During the period of her work the *dai* is given food from the household and when she leaves certain other presents and clothes are likely to be forthcoming. No difference in the period of uncleanness is made on account of sex—in either case it lasts for six days. In some places there is a relaxation of the strictness after the third day. A special drink said to be made of "ginger root (*Cleome viscosa*), raw sugar (*gur*) and certain jungle roots boiled together" is given to her three times a day until she is stronger.

During this period the mother is confined to her room. She should not touch anything and should spend the time lying down. Certain measures should now be taken to protect the mother and the young child from evil influences. These influences are particularly malignant during the first six days, but may be overcome by certain methods. A small fire should constantly burn in the lying-in room and should be kept alive by wood from the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*). *Bel* is the wood of the gods and they are attracted by its smoke and no evil spirits dare be present at the same time. Sometimes twigs of *bel* wood are placed beside the infant or a twig of the same may be imbedded in the floor. The wood of the *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*)

1 The *Birhors*, p. 222.

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that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

Abuse. The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

Ashes are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

Bangles are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

Charcoal, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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forms an effective bar to evil spirits who dare not cross that line. Sometimes it is dropped into milk as it is brought home, in order to protect it from the milk-loving *bhuts*.

. *Colours* are also an effective protection. Black is particularly valuable as a prophylactic from the evil eye. Hence lamp-black is put on the face just beneath the child's eye. This disguises and renders him less attractive, and as a result the evil eye will not linger on him. Black marks on a white-washed tile or earthen pot ward off the evil eye in the case of crops. Black also pleases Kali and she is glad to see it.

Red frightens off demons and red flags found above almost every shrine have a dual significance : they please the good spirits and frighten off the evil ones. The *sendur* (vermilion) put on the bride and groom is a protective at that vital time. Following the purification ceremony, six days after the birth of the child, the mother's feet are coloured red.

Yellow also protects and there are anointings with turmeric in oil at the times of birth, wedding and death. At such crises of the soul they keep away forces bent on evil.

White is also used : a white *pot*, or daub, placed on the side of the face, immediately in front of the ears, is said to be protective in the case of the child and wards off the evil eye.

Copper. Iron and copper bangles are common among the Kols and some say that of the two copper is to be preferred and is more effective ; it was offered to Hanumanji the monkey god, and is hence very sacred. On no account should this sacred metal be used for dishes nor *lotas*, especially if the *lota* is to be taken out for latrine purposes. To do this would insult Hanumanji and show disrespect to copper. The copper bangle is a very potent charm, and among Kols it is often found that children have a copper anklet on one foot and an iron one on the other. The same applies to the wrists. The little boxes frequently seen attached to strings about the neck, containing powerful protectives such as tiger's claws *or mantras* (written charms), are generally made of copper.

Incense and Smoke. Incense attracts good deities and, conversely, repels evil personalities. At the time of worship incense is thought of as having this dual function. The odour of burning *ghi* is very effectual in this respect. Smoke usually repels demons and if articles which cause an evil odour are dropped into the fire they are driven away. In the Kol birth chamber the baby is passed through smoke soon after birth, and for some days the air in the lying-in room is kept smoky by means of a fire smoldering somewhere within it.

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these conditions the evil spirit is sternly addressed and in the name of Khermai is ordered to leave the person affected and enter the chicken. Upon being satisfied that the transaction has actually occurred there are now two or three ways of dealing with the chicken. The most common procedure is to sacrifice it to Khermai, and as the blood is sprinkled at the base of the shrine she is implored to conduct the evil spirit far away so that it may trouble them no more. The less common method is to take the chicken into the jungle, the further away the better, and loose it there, invoking Khermai to let the spirit be in the chicken as long as the latter lives; then when the chicken dies, never to allow the spirit to be able to find its way back to the village. If the chicken should return alive to the village it would mean that the spirit would also re-enter and harm someone.

Supa. The *supa* or winnowing fan is a great protective and has many magical uses. The new-born infant is laid in it and no evil spirit will dare touch him there. It is used in various wave ceremonies, notably during the wedding cycle. It is used to cast out demons and to detect demon possession.

Tattooing has its protective value and in an earlier section this was discussed. It was noted that it protected against disease and aided in the necessary household activities.[1]

Threads, red or black in colour, are useful about the neck. This applies particularly to the child, but the adult often has one somewhere on his person. At *Rakshabandan* time the opposite sexes tie threads on members of the family. Threads are used in connection with the marriage of trees and a thread is wrapped seven times around the marriage pole. Threads are often knotted to afford further protection.

Thorns. Thorns afford great trouble to the spirits. They are put over the bodies of the deceased in the graves and are often put about the houses, where they serve the dual purpose of keeping off both beast and spirit. They are used in magical practices, so that when a jackal crosses the road a pile of thorns should be set up, a stone put in the centre, and with one's foot placed on the stone the jackal should be roundly cursed.

Trees and Plants. Any tree associated with the gods is holy and keeps away evil powers and influences. A *charpai* or cot of *nim* wood is very useful as it protects one when he is helpless in his sleep. Some *nim* (*Melia azadirachta*) should always be placed in the lying-

1. See pp. 29-31.

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789 in room and about the door leading to it. Wood from the *bel* tree 824 (*Aegle marmelos*) is useful if burned in the lying-in room and this is [814] done for a period of six days after the child's birth, for this [846] is a critical time from the point of view of evil influences. In Hindu thought *bel* is associated with the god Vishnu. The *tulasi* [844] plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is helpful in affording a safe delivery and a bit of it is laid over the abdomen of a woman expecting a child. Mango leaves, being lucky and everlasting, are uniformly used in connection with the wedding cycle. Ginger is a devil-scarer, and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) with its yellow colour is used continually [585] to afford protection. The *magrohan* of the wedding booth should have turmeric put into the hole in which it is placed. The same practice is observed when the umbilical cord is buried or the foundation of a house is laid.

789 *Tying the Village.* Tying the village and loosing the *devi* is a 776 magic rite which is common among Kols and comes at set seasons. 753 In Barela, for example, this festival is observed in connection with [184] Mari *devi*, the goddess of cholera. It takes two forms and the observance is reported all over the Kol community.

The cholera *devi*, Marimai, must, if possible, be kept imprisoned in her shrine for a portion of the year, particularly during the cholera season. At Barela they say that she must be tied between *Baisháka* (April-May) and *Pus* (December-January). The rest of the year, say for the period of from three to four months, she may roam as she pleases. About the middle of *Pus* a *panda* cuts the cotton cord kept in the shrine. It is this cord that is supposed to imprison her, so when it is cut, she is no longer bound by it. Other *devis* are also considered to be loose at that season. Along in the month of *Baisháka*, the deity is brought back to the shrine by offerings and sacrifices, the magic thread is tied by the same *panda* that released the *devi* previously, and she is now considered bound. This is followed by a feast near the shrine to which only the men may come.

Along with this there is a second form of tying the village and the two are occasionally combined. In this case some water, wine, milk and powdered charcoal are brought to the shrine where a sacrifice is offered and the *devi* implored to let the magic ring about the village prevent the entrance into it of cholera or smallpox. The *panda* then mixes the ingredients mentioned above and the mixture is put into a glass bottle or into a tin with a tiny hole in the bottom. The men then proceed to tie the whole or a part of the village. If the whole is tied it is called *gaonbandh*, and if part, *tolabandh*. They proceed with drumming and singing and a line of the mixture is laid down, either

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9. An Intrigue in the Home.

539 832 *Ka dekh machari luriya karai hai?*
Ka dekh bhamra lobhay?
Jal dekh machari luriya karai hai,
Phul dekh bhamra lobhay.
Ka mangai sari?
Ka mangai sarahaj?
Ka mangai ahaniya tumhar?
Sari lo mangai phulon ka gajra,
Sarahaj lahra palor,
Ahaniya mangai sunna ki churiya,
Jo na rahe sansar.

Sari se sarahaj adhika piyari,
Sas Ganga jala pani.
Ab mai pita ki kiriya khaun:
Ab na jab sasurari!

What draws the fish? What tempts the bee?
Water the fish, and flowers the bee.
What wants your *sari*? (Sister-in-law)
Why beckons your *sarahaj*? (Brother-in-law's wife)
What does your *ahaniya* need? (Mistress, wife)
Your *sari* wants a wreath of flowers,
Your *sarahaj* looks for beautiful clothes,
And your *ahaniya* wants bangles,
Golden ones of matchless beauty.
Your *sarahaj* is dearer than your *sari*.
Your *sas* (Mother-in-law) is pure like Ganges water,
By My parents I swear:
I shall never henceforth
Go to my *sasur's* (Father-in-law) house!

IV. Songs of Social Life.

1. A Song of Birth-pangs.

539 844 *Ghumara ghumara pira awai hou nahin janai,*
Janai mori lahuri nandiya sasa to sowai mahaliya.
Nanda gajewari sasa ho dahai,
Chhanguriya raja ho pawaun pindariya.
Tumhari mahaliya kachhu shora jagaya nahi jagan.

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Such birth-pangs and inner writhings as none ever dreamed, are upon me.
But only my little sister-in-law is aware of it all,
And my mother-in-law in the palace peacefully sleeps!
And there sits my husband's sister:
Massaging that woman—my mother-in-law!
And the legs of that woman's king!
For in spite of all my groanings
You waken not in your palace.

2. Congratulations for a Son.

Bhali khet jahan tilli upaji,
Gahun upaji nau sar.
Kokh bhali jahan lalan upaje,
Bajan badhaiya Ayodhya mein.

Good earth is that which gives us sesame,
And wheat grows best in fields embanked.
Blest is the womb that gives good sons,
'Tis the occasion for the *badhawa* song;
For this was sung in Ayodhya (when Ram was born).

3. A Song for the Chhatthi Rejoicings.

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Kajli ke bana phula phulai bara sundara phulai,
Nahi janau maliya ke sinche se,
Aur nahin janau kheta guna?
Jo wei charon phulawa pawanli to palana binauti,
Wohi mein lalna jhulaunti jarawan ka jalaunti.

In the forests of Kajli the most beautiful flowers bloom.
To what this is due I know not:
Is it the water from the gardener's hand?
Or is it the virtue of the field itself?
If only thence I could get those fair flowers,
I would form with them a sweet cradle:
And in it rock my child,
And all my neighbours should envy.....

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Phágun	..	February-March.
Chaita	..	March-April.
Baishákha	..	April-May.
Jeth	..	May-June.

III. LOVE AND INTRIGUE.

1. A *dádrá* from Katni. The *lotá* is a brass vessel used for carrying liquids. A cord is frequently tied about its neck and it is lowered into a well in order to bring up water. See note on 6, 7 below.

2. A *khyál* from Imalhapur. This is a teasing song and in this case the *lotá* is addressed to a young maid of beauty. The *pánwálá* prepares and sells the *pán*, a mixture of betel nut, lime and tobacco wrapped in Piper leaves (*Piper betel*).

3. A *dádrá* from Katni.

4. A *dádrá* sung at the wedding season: from Jubbulpore. The suspicious husband is assured that his wife's smiles and blushes are innocent, and are directed to no other man. The first line should be repeated four times.

5. A *dádrá* from Katni. The *dhímar* is a member of the fisherman caste, but is used in another sense.

6, 7. These are both *dádrás* from Katni. The symbolism of these two songs is perhaps obvious. Sexual matters are referred to by the men as entering a house, as a lotus on a pond or in terms of getting water from the well.

8. A *rdi* from Katni.

9. A *biyá*, or wedding song; sung at the time of the circumambulation of the sacred post. From Salavara. The terms of relationship are noted in the text of the translation. The intrigue is rather complicated and it is evident that the mother-in-law, who ought to be on her guard, is a simpleton and does not realise what is going on. The symbolism is apparent.

IV. SONGS OF SOCIAL EVENTS.

1. This song is called *chhaukar* as it is sung on the sixth night after the birth of a child. The woman complains that the in-laws care nothing for her birth-pangs. Given by women near Katni.

2. A *badhwá*, a song sung by women when a male child is born. The song is kept up for long periods and is repeated again and again. It is essentially a song of congratulation. Ayodhya was the place of Ram's birth. This song given by women near Katni.

3. Another *chhaukar* or sixth-night song from Katni. A Kajali forest (dense—black as *kajal*) is one inhabited by elephants. The swing has a sexual symbolism.

4. A *dádrá* from Imalhapur. The *Púrabiyás* are dwellers in the eastern parts. There is a Purbiya subdivision of Chamars. (Briggs, *op. cit.* page 24). The *Baghels* are men of Baghelkhand.

5. A *rdi* from Katni.

6. A marriage *dádrá* from Barela and sung as a teasing song. *Marwá* or *marhwá*: the wedding booth.